

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 031505

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TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: COLUMN BY JOSEPH KRAFT, FEBRUARY 11, 1975

FOR AMBASSADOR ANDERSON FROM S/PRS

NO. 7

QUOTE: RETRIEVING STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY

HENRY KISSINGER HAS CONFOUNDED HIS CRITICS ONCE AGAIN.
THE OBITUARIES PUBLISHED FOR HIS STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY
AT THE TIME OF THE RABAT SUMMIT CONFERENCE HAVE TURNED OUT
TO BE PREMATURE.

INDEED, THE SECRETARY ALREADY HAS GOING A NEW PROCESS OF
NEGOTIATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT. AT THE VERY LEAST,
HIS CURRENT TRIP TO THE MIDEAST WILL MAKE AN INDENT FOR
YET FURTHER STEPS.

TO UNDERSTAND THE STATE OF PLAY IT IS NECESSARY TO GO BACK
TO THE RABAT SUMMIT MEETING LAST FALL. THE ARAB (LINE
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PAGE 02 STATE 031505

DROPPED FROM TRANSCRIPT) FOR HIS STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY

TO MANY PERSONS, INCLUDING THIS COLUMIST, TO RUN DIRECTLY
ATHWART THE CENTRAL PRINCIPLE OF THE STEP-BY-STEP TACTIC.

DR. KISSINGER'S APPROACH HAS AT ITS HEART A RECIPROCAL
EXCHANGE OF CONCESSIONS BY ISRAEL AND EGYPT. THE ISRAELIS
ARE SUPPOSED TO YIELD BITS OF THE SINAI DESERT OCCUPIED IN
THE 1973 AND 1976 WARS IN RETURN FOR EGYPTIAN MOVES
IMPLYING ACCEPTANCE OF THE JEWISH STATE. A PIECE OF LAND
IS TO BE TRADED FOR A PIECE OF PEACE OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

PRESIDENT SADAT OF EGYPT INSISTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD
NOT MOVE SEPARATELY FROM OTHER ARAB LEADERS. SO THE
FIRST ROUND AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT WAS LINKED
TO AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA INVOLVING A
SMALL ISRAELI PULLBACK ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

SINCE ISRAEL REFUSED TO GO FURTHER ON GOLAN, THE NEXT
ROUND WITH EGYPT WAS TO HAVE BEEN LINKED WITH AN ACCOMMO-
DATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND KING HUSSEIN INVOLVING RETURN
OF TERRITORY ON THE WEST BANK OF THE JORDAN RIVER. AT
RABAT, HOWEVER, THE ARAB LEADERS KNOCKED HUSSEIN OUT AS
A NEGOTIATOR FOR THE WEST BANK BY ASSERTING THAT ONLY
YASSER ARAFAT AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
COULD LEGITIMATELY NEGOTIATE FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. SINCE ISRAEL REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE
WITH ARAFAT, IT LOOKED LIKE A STALEMATE.

BUT FOR MONTHS DR. KISSINGER HAS BEEN MOUNTING PRESSURE
ON BOTH ISRAELIS AND EGYPTIANS TO GET OFF THE DIME. HE
HAS LET THE ISRAELIS KNOW BY DIRECT AND INDIRECT STATE-
MENTS THAT THE UNITED STATES EXPECTED THEM TO MAKE A
VERY BIG WITHDRAWAL IN THE SINAI DESERT AS PART OF THE
NEXT ROUND OF TALKS. IT IS NOW UNDERSTOOD, AT LEAST BY
PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN AND FOREIGN MINISTER YIGAL
ALLON, THAT DR. KISSINGER EXPECTS THEM TO GIVE UP A
STRIP ABOUT 50 MILES WIDE, INCLUDING THE GIDI AND MITLA
PASSES AND THE OIL FIELDS OF ABU RUDEIS.

AT THE SAME TIME, DR. KISSINGER HAS BEEN LETTING PRESIDENT
SADAT AND HIS ARAB SUPPORTERS KNOW THAT THE UNITED STATES
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PAGE 03 STATE 031505

WOULD NOT GIVE EGYPT NEW MILITARY SUPPLIES, AND THAT, IF
THREATENED BY A CUT IN OIL SUPPLIES FROM THE PERSIAN
GULF, WASHINGTON MIGHT TAKE MILITARY ACTION. THE
EGYPTIAN LEADER, AND HIS SAUDI ARABIAN SUPPORTERS, WERE
THUS WARNED THAT INTRANSIGENT ANTI-ZIONISM MIGHT CONFLICT
WITH ANTICOMMUNISM AND JEOPARDIZE PETROLEUM.

AT THE SAME TIME, DR. KISSINGER LET MR. SADAT KNOW OF THE

BIG CONCESSIONS HE WAS PREPARED TO WREST FROM THE ISRAELIS, PROVIDING CAIRO WOULD ALSO PROVE ACCOMMODATING. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, PRESIDENT SADAT HAS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN WHAT AMOUNTS TO ANOTHER ROUND OF SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL.

DR. KISSINGER'S IMMEDIATE PURPOSE ON THE PRESENT TRIP IS TO TRANSLATE LOOSE UNDERSTANDINGS TO FIRM COMMITMENTS. IN ISRAEL HE WILL BE TRYING TO ROPE THE WHOLE GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER RABIN ON TO THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PASSES AND OIL FIELDS.

IN EGYPT HE WILL TRY TO WREST FROM PRESIDENT SADAT -- IN PRIVATE TALKS -- THE KIND OF CONCESSIONS THAT WOULD JUSTIFY A MAJOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. THAT COULD BE A POLITICAL GESTURE -- SUCH AS ALLOWING COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS BETWEEN TEL AVIV AND CAIRO -- OR AGREEMENT THAT SEVERAL YEARS WOULD INTERVENE BETWEEN ISRAEL'S ABANDONMENT OF ANOTHER SLICE OF SINAI AND THE NEXT STEP.

PERHAPS DR. KISSINGER WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GET IT TOGETHER IN CAIRO AND JERUSALEM. BUT THE ODDS ARE ON SUCCESS. ONE GOOD GAUGE LIES IN THE OPPOSITION TO THE ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN LEADERS.

THE OPPOSITION TO PRIME MINISTER RABIN -- WHICH HEADS UP IN DEFENSE MINISTER SHIMON PARES AND FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER ABBA EBAN -- ARGUES THAT GIVING UP THE OIL FIELDS AND PASSES IS SO GREAT A CONCESSION THAT ISRAEL SHOULD GET A MAJOR STEP TOWARD PEACE. BUT THAT WOULD INVOLVE SOMETHING VERY RISKY FOR ISRAEL -- A FULL-DRESS CONFERENCE AT GENEVA WITH THE PRESENCE OF THE RUSSIANS, SOME WEST EUROPEANS AND THE PLO.

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PAGE 04 STATE 031505

THE OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT SADAT LIES IN SYRIA AND THE PLO. THEY SAY THEY WILL GO TO WAR WITH ISRAEL RATHER THAN ALLOW EGYPT TO CONCLUDE A SEPARATE DEAL. BUT WILL THEY? OR WON'T THEY, IN THE PINCH, ALSO AGREE TO ANOTHER STEP FORWARD?

WHAT ALL THIS SAYS TO ME IS THAT DR. KISSINGER HAS RETRIEVED STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY FROM THE ASHES OF RABAT. THE MOMENTUM IS WITH HIM, AND PRUDENCE DOES NOT LIE IN PREDICTING FAILURE. END QUOTE

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